



CHECKLIST TO MINIMIZE THE MOST COMMON VOLUNTEER RISKS

This checklist, created by VIS and updated in 2016, originally was published in October 2003 in e-volunteerism, the online journal of Energize, Inc., an international training, consulting and publishing firm based in Philadelphia. It is included in Energize's "Everyone Ready®" Self-Instruction Guide, "Risk and Insurance For Involving Volunteers." For more information on this excellent training program for volunteer managers, please go to www.everyoneready.info.

- Ensure each volunteer is given a thorough orientation to his or her role, the environment in which she or he will be working, all risks involved, and any procedures or protocol that will help minimize the risk.
- Clear walkways, building entrances, steps, etc. of anything that might cause a volunteer to slip or trip.
- When volunteers are assigned to another location, make sure those areas have also been freed of fall hazards.
- Caution volunteers that they might need to use more care walking than they do when they're in their own homes.

If volunteers are asked to lift or carry:

- Make sure the material is light and compact enough to lift safely.
- Train volunteers in safe lifting techniques.
- Reduce the risk of injury by rearranging items to be lifted, assigning more (or stronger) volunteers to the task, or obtaining hand trucks, a dolly or other materials-handling equipment.
- Identify what equipment or tools volunteers use.
- Train volunteers to use all tools and equipment properly.
- Require volunteers to demonstrate that they truly can use the tools safely.
- If there is a risk of cuts or scratches in the volunteer's work, require long sleeves and gloves.
- Before assigning tasks, consider any allergies or special medical needs the volunteer might have.
- Have and enforce a formal policy for screening and supervising volunteers. Require volunteers to follow your rules, and hold them accountable for doing so.
- Make sure volunteers know and follow the chain of command for reporting abuse or other problems they observe in the course of their work.

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- For volunteers who are caregivers, train them in the communication aspects of their duty, so they can understand the wants, needs, and fears of the person for whom they are caring.
- Obtain motor vehicle records and copies of drivers' licenses for all volunteers who will drive your organization's vehicles or their own, on assignments.
- Devote adequate training time to vehicle safety, particularly with respect to driving in inclement weather.
- Monitor the driving of elderly volunteers.